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ABSTRACT

As one of the first steps in developing a statewide environmental education plan for the State of New Hampshire, the Environmental Education Planning Council conducted an environmental education needs assessment, which was designed solely to order the state's environmental education needs. The purpose of this publication is to report the results of that educational assessment. A Needs Assessment questionnaire was developed for distribution to 1,563 persons thought to be representative of groups which should be involved in environmental education. The results reported in this document represent the opinions of 452 respondents. Examination of the returns indicates that 46 percent of the respondents were engaged in some phase of professional education, and that an additional 15 percent of the returns were sent in by persons representative of organizations involved to some extent with environmental issues. (BT)

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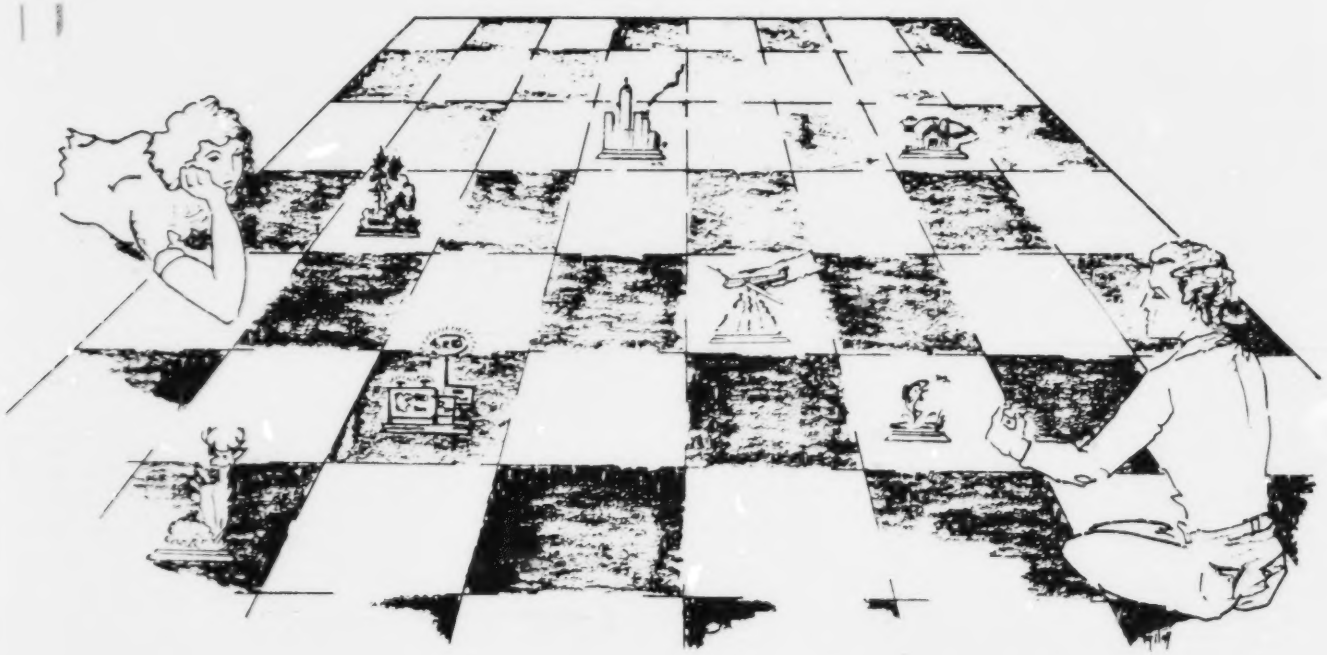
1973 NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT



ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION FOR NEW HAMPSHIRE

SE 018 128

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1973 NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Membership of Environmental Education Planning Council of New Hampshire . . . . . Inside Front Cover

Introduction 1

Needs Assessment Report 3

Appendices 9

INTRODUCTION

The Environmental Education Planning Council of New Hampshire is convinced that environmental education is not only important but that it is essential. Furthermore, the Council feels that environmental education is necessary for all citizens from school age through adult. As one of the first steps in developing a statewide environmental education plan, the Council has conducted an environmental education needs assessment which was designed solely to order the state's environmental education needs, and in no way to rank the many environmental issues facing our State. The purpose of this publication is to report the results of that educational assessment.

In order to collect pertinent data, a Needs Assessment questionnaire was developed for distribution to 1,563 persons representative of groups which, in the Council's opinion, should be involved with environmental education (see Appendix B). The results reported herein represent the opinions of the 452 respondents who were concerned enough to return completed questionnaires. Examination of the returns indicates that 46% of the respondents were engaged in some phase of professional education, and that an additional 15% of the returns were sent in by persons representative of organizations involved to some extent with environmental issues.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT

The Environmental Education Planning Council, comprised of 23 leaders from a broad spectrum of interest groups throughout the state, has been meeting for two years. It is co-sponsored by the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, the New Hampshire Charitable Fund and Affiliated Trusts, the Audubon Society of New Hampshire, the Cooperative Extension Service, and the State Department of Education, and has the support of a broad spectrum of additional agencies, groups, individuals, and organizations. The Council is funded by grants from the Spaulding-Potter Charitable Trust and the United States Office of Education's Environmental Education Act of 1970 (USOE-EE).

The Council's goal is to develop an environmental education plan for the State of New Hampshire. This plan will assess the state's environmental education needs; include an evaluation of statewide and regional resources for environmental education available to local communities; and serve as a guide to assist local communities in implementing environmental education programs (see Appendix A).

Assessment of the state's environmental education needs was initiated to obtain both input information for the state plan and direction for the Council's activities, as well as to motivate public interest, awareness, and action. As a result of meeting with George Lewis, of the State Department of Education's Planning and Evaluation Unit, and discussing various needs assessment techniques, the Council decided to employ a closed-ended, two-dimensional questionnaire similar to the institutional goal inventories developed by Norman P. Uhl.[1] Each Council member then prepared a list of environmental education needs and goals pertinent to his area of competence. At a series of subsequent subcommittee meetings the various lists were refined, expanded, and carefully revised to conform to Uhl's format. Simultaneously, a second subcommittee developed a preliminary mailing list of individuals, groups and agencies which would be given the opportunity to rate the composite list of needs.

After receiving the USOE-EE grant, the Council hired a full-time executive secretary who began work on September 15, 1972. In consultation with Mr. Lewis, the executive secretary further revised the Council's list of needs and organized it into two lists, one with 22 goal statements and one with 22 implementation strategies. He also expanded the mailing list. The executive secretary then developed a preliminary format of the

[1] Uhl, Norman P. Identifying Institutional Goals National Laboratory for Higher Education, Durham, N.C., 1971.

questionnaire and field tested it with 31 individuals from the mailing list. As a result of this field testing, minor changes were made in the wording of several statements and major changes were made in the instructions to recipients and in the format. In addition, provision was made to include space for the solicitation of respondent comments.

As required by the Uhl format, the questionnaire was designed so that respondents would be asked to rate the importance of each goal statement and implementation strategy in two dimensions. First, "How much emphasis do you think is being placed on this goal at the present time?" Second, "How much emphasis do you think should be placed on this goal?" The Uhl rating scale was also utilized. This is a numerical scale ranging from 5 (of extremely high importance) to 1 (of low importance), with 0 indicating no opinion.

As the questionnaire was to be sent to a broad based sample of New Hampshire residents concerned with the environment and with environmental education, the Council felt that the results of the should be ratings would provide reliable data on the relative importance respondents attached to the various goal statements and implementation strategies. The is rating was called for, not as an end in itself, but to provide a means of comparison. The Council hoped that a comparison of the differences between the average should be rating and the average is rating for each statement would provide sufficient information for a preliminary ordering of priorities.

The revised Needs Assessment Questionnaire was printed and sent in January 1973 to 1,563 individuals, groups and agencies representing 18 broad categories. Four hundred fifty-two questionnaires were returned, providing an overall response rate of 29%. Appendix B lists the number of questionnaires sent to, as well as the number, distribution, and percentage of return for, each of the 18 categories. Appendix C tabulates respondent comments added to completed questionnaires.

Data processing of returned questionnaires was carried out by the Bureau of Educational Research and Testing Services (BERTS) Center at the University of New Hampshire which supplied the Council with computer print-outs compiling for each should be statement and each is statement rating information for all respondents as shown on the replica pages included in Appendix D.

A brief statistical analysis of the results was then carried out with advice from Dr. Robert Schweiker of the Department of Education's Planning and Evaluation Unit. This consisted of using the average should be ratings of the total response group to rank goal statements and implementation strategies in decreasing order, from highest to lowest (see Appendices E and F, Rank Order - All Respondents).

The total group was then divided into two subgroups consisting of respondents who were engaged in some phase of professional

ıcation and respondents who were engaged in all other professions (see Appendix B). Next, the BERTS Center compiled computer print-outs listing for each goal statement and implementation strategy the distribution and average should be ratings of each subgroup (see Appendix D). This distribution data was used to develop 2x6 chi square matrices comparing responses of the two subgroups. Because the calculated chi square values indicate that there is no more than a 37% chance, on the average, that these two subgroups represent the same population, their ratings must be considered separately.

As with the total response group, the average should be ratings of both the educator and non-educator subgroups were used to rank the goal statements and implementation strategies in decreasing order (see Appendices E and F). Tables 1 and 2 list in decreasing order the five goal statements and the five implementation strategies which received the highest average should be ratings of each of the two subgroups.

Table 1

Five Goal Statements

Receiving the Highest Average SHOULD BE Ratings of:

Educator Subgroup	Non-Educator Subgroup
1. To encourage the development of environmental education programs in schools at all grade levels, kindergarten through Grade 12.	1. To encourage the development of environmental education programs in schools at all grade levels, kindergarten through Grade 12.
2. To promote total community involvement in the identification and solution of local environmental problems.	2. To encourage local groups, organizations and agencies to utilize professional assistance in planning water, air and land use.
3. To encourage local groups, organizations and agencies to utilize professional assistance in planning water, air and land use.	3. To encourage governmental agencies, educational institutions, businesses and industries to make use of available technical data and environmental information. (Ranked 11th by educators)
4. To encourage educational programs which will assist in the identification of local environmental problems and the development and implementation of solutions to these problems. (Ranked 7th by non-educators)	4. To encourage communication between environmental agencies and organizations. (Ranked 12th by educators)
5. To encourage use of public lands (local, state, and federal) for environmental education. (Ranked 11th by non-educators)	5. To promote total community involvement in the identification and solution of local environmental problems.

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Table 2

Five Implementation Strategies

Receiving the Highest Average SHOULD BE Ratings of:

Educator Subgroup	Non-Educator Subgroup
1. To develop an environmental awareness in the total population.	1. To develop an environmental awareness in the total population.
2. To provide teachers and school administrators with environmental information and classroom techniques in environmental education.	2. To provide assistance in the development of environmental legislation. (Ranked 10th by educators)
3. To involve youth in the implementation of action programs to improve the environment. (Ranked 8th by non-educators)	3. To make use of all media for the dissemination of environmental information.
4. To make use of all media for the dissemination of environmental information.	4. To provide teachers and school administrators with environmental information and classroom techniques in environmental education.
5. To compile and disseminate information about local, regional and statewide organizations, agencies institutions and businesses which will provide speakers, literature, resource people, information or financial assistance to support local environmental activities. (Ranked 9th by non-educators)	5. To provide technical assistance to local groups, organizations, and agencies in the development and implementation of their goals and priorities. (Ranked 12th by educators)

These tables list New Hampshire's most important environmental education needs as observed by the two subgroups. It can be noted that both educators and non-educators agree in ranking three of the same goal statements and three of the same implementation strategies in their top five. Parenthetical notations appearing in Tables 1 and 2 indicate how those goal statements or implementation strategies ranked in the top five of only one subgroup were ranked by the other subgroup. It would seem that the design of any environmental education program should take into consideration the goal statements and implementation strategies which both subgroups rank in their top five. However, environmental education programs which address themselves to or are designed primarily for use by one or the other of these populations should emphasize those needs particular to that subgroup.

As mentioned previously, the Council had hoped to use the difference between the average is and the average should be ratings as a means of identifying and ordering the State's environmental education priorities. However, a number of

respondents either stated flatly that they were not qualified to rate the is responses or suggested that they felt uneasy about making these ratings. In fact, on some statements up to 22.5% of the respondents either circled "0" for "no opinion" or did not respond at all to the is rating, making their statistical validity questionable. However, it becomes quite clear that either a real or imagined lack of current information about environmental education is felt by a significant number of respondents. This fact alone indicates a priority need for increased public information, both in the area of environmental problems and environmental education programs. Surprisingly, a number of the qualifying comments and no opinion-no response ratings were encountered on questionnaires returned by persons associated with environmentally concerned groups or organizations. Thus it would seem that there is a need for increased environmental reporting not only in the mass media but also within and between environmental groups. This, of course, is a two-way process and increased reporting and availability of information is only effective if it is read and assimilated into the actions of the target populations.

In summary, the administration of this needs assessment has uncovered the need for a greater degree of communication on environmental matters, not only for the general public through mass media but also within and between environmentally concerned and active groups. It is interesting to note that both educators and non-educators list among their top five implementation strategies the need for increased use of the media in disseminating environmental information. Educators and non-educators both call for the development of environmental education programs at all grade levels in the schools and both subgroups agree on the need for providing schools with environmental information and environmental education techniques. Both subgroups emphasize the need for increased public awareness to and involvement in the identification and solution of local environmental problems, utilizing professional assistance whenever necessary. Educators place a high priority on: the development of educational programs to assist local citizens in solving their environmental problems; the use of public land for environmental education programs; the involvement of more youth in environmental action; and the need for gathering information on speakers, literature, and materials to support local action. Non-educators indicate a need for increased communication between environmental agencies and groups, and for assistance in the development of environmental legislation. They also call for the increased use of available data and technical assistance in solving local environmental problems.

APPENDICES

A Outline of State Plan 11

B Distribution of Environmental Education Needs Assessment Questionnaires by Respondent Category 13

C Comments Added to Questionnaires by Respondents 15

D Sample Page from BERTS Print-out
Showing IS Responses 17
Showing SHOULD BE Responses 19

E Goal Statements Showing Their Relative Importance as Rated by Respondents 21

F Implementation Strategies Showing Their Relative Importance as Rated by Respondents 25

APPENDIX A

Outline of the State Plan

1. Membership of Environmental Education Planning Council of New Hampshire
2. Introductory Letter
3. Title Page
4. Table of Contents
5. Abstract
6. Foreword
   a) History of Council and planning process, including description of need for overall state coordination
   b) Working description of environmental education and how it can facilitate the process of identifying and solving environmental problems
7. Description of the environmental (education) problems of New Hampshire
8. How environmental education can facilitate the solution of those problems
   a) Existing needs in environmental education in New Hampshire (Needs Report)
   b) Goals and objectives for meeting those needs
   c) Existing constraints
9. Recommendations and strategies for achieving stated goals and overcoming constraints
   a) For the state as a whole
   b) For specific groups, e.g. communities, schools, non-formal and adult education, conservation groups, business, legislators, mass communication
   c) How to evaluate effectiveness of strategies on various levels

Addenda (separate publications)

1. Needs Document
2. Existing resources in the state, e.g. physical, human, programs, materials

APPENDIX B

Distribution of Environmental Education Needs Assessment Questionnaires By Respondent Category (see Column 5)

	Type of Agency or Organization	Number Sent	Number Returned	Response Rate	Percent of Total Response
#	Public and Private Environmentally Concerned Organizations	180	69	38%	15%
*	Secondary School Science Department Heads	133	58	44%	13%
#	Town Officials	263	51	19%	11%
#	State and Federal Regulatory Agencies	89	47	53%	10%
*	Elementary School Principals	110	34	31%	8%
*	Secondary School Principals	138	33	24%	7%
#	School Board Members	166	26	16%	6%
*	Secondary School Social Studies Department Heads	128	25	20%	6%
*	State Department of Education	55	22	40%	5%
#	Planners Associations	51	22	43%	5%
*	School Superintendents	44	18	41%	4%
*	Higher Education	35	14	40%	3%
#	Soil Conservation Districts	50	9	18%	2%
#	News Media	39	8	20%	2%
#	Lawyers	27	5	19%	1%
#	Executive Department and General Court	22	4	18%	1%
#	Business and Industry	17	6	35%	1%
#	Labor	16	1	6%	0%
		1,563	452	29% (average)	100%

\# Non-educators which compr se 54% of respondents
* Educators which comprise 46% of respondents

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APPENDIX C

Comments Added to Questionnaires by Respondents

Comment	Number of Times Added
Not qualified or felt uneasy about making is ratings	20
Need for public motivation and change of social values	15
Educate students	14
Public must learn to understand intricacies, balances, and social implications of environmental problems	14
Non-biased information and technical assistance needed	12
Need planning and/or money	12
Political action and/or legislation needed	12
Coordination needed between agencies and groups	11
Critical of crash, shortsighted, or biased programs	10
Public awareness to problems must be increased	9
Educate teachers	7
Educate adults	5
Programs and actions must come at the local level	5
State should have an environmental education consultant	5
Increased public involvement needed	4
Critical of questionnaire or Environmental Education Planning Council	4

Comments Added by less than Four Respondents

Too many unqualified persons working in the field

Educate public to assume tax burden of open land

Create new nature centers

Industry must be more responsive

Extend existing programs rather than create new ones

Develop school site study areas

Train teacher's aides

Develop an effective lobby

Change priorities of all media with respect to the environment

Educate legislators

Develop techniques to identify local pressure points

APPENDIX D

Sample Page from BERTS Print-out Showing IS Responses

GOAL IS ENCOURAGE THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN SCHOOLS AT ALL GRADE LEVELS, KINDERGARTEN THROUGH GRADE 12

RESPONSE	NUM	P1	P2	DISTRIBUTION
5=EX H I	5	1	1	*
4=HIGH I	22	5	5	*****
3=MED I	146	33	32	**********
2=LOW I	182	42	40	********** ******
1=NO IMP	57	13	13	**********
0=NO OPN	24	6	5	******
TOTAL	436			

EACH STAR IN THE ABOVE DISTRIBUTION REPRESENTS 4 CASE(S)

THE AVERAGE RESPONSE TO THE ABOVE DISTRIBUTION IS 2.359

P1= PERCENT OF TOTAL RESPONDING TO THE ABOVE ITEM

P2= PERCENT OF TOTAL RESPONDING TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE

16 OF THE TOTAL RESPONDING TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE DID NOT ANSWER THE ABOVE ITEM

452 RESPONDED TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Sample Page from BERTS Print-out Showing SHOULD BE Responses

GOAL SHOULD BE ENCOURAGE THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN SCHOOLS AT ALL GRADE LEVELS, KINDERGARTEN THROUGH GRADE 12

RESPONSE	NUM	P1	P2	DISTRIBUTION
5=EX H I	230	51	51	**********
4=HIGH I	158	35	35	**********
3=MED I	48	11	11	*********
2=LOW I	7	2	2	*
1=NO IMP	3	1	1	*
0=NO OPN	1	0	0	*
TOTAL	447			

EACH STAR IN THE ABOVE DISTRIBUTION REPRESENTS 5 CASE(S)

THE AVERAGE RESPONSE TO THE ABOVE DISTRIBUTION IS 4.357

P1= PERCENT OF TOTAL RESPONDING TO THE ABOVE ITEM

P2= PERCENT OF TOTAL RESPONDING TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE

5 OF THE TOTAL RESPONDING TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE DID NOT ANSWER THE ABOVE ITEM

452 RESPONDED TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENDIX E

Rank Order of Goal Statements

From Most Important to Least Important Based on Average SHOULD BE Ratings of:

	Total Response Group	Educator Subgroup	Non-educator Subgroup
To encourage the development of environmental education programs in schools at all grade levels, kindergarten through Grade 12	1	1	1
To encourage local groups, organizations and agencies to utilize professional assistance in planning water, air and land use	2	3	2
To promote total community involvement in the identification and solution of local environmental problems	3	2	5
To encourage educational programs which will assist in the identification of local environmental problems and the development and implementation of solutions to these problems	4	4	7
To encourage governmental agencies, educational institutions, businesses and industries to make use of available technical data and environmental information	5	11	3
To encourage youth groups to become involved in environmental activities	6	8	6
To promote research which will provide local groups, organizations and agencies with assistance in solving local environmental problems	7	6	10
To encourage use of public lands (local, state, and federal) for environmental education	8	5	11
To encourage the general public to become involved in environmental activities	9	7	9
To encourage communication between environmental agencies and organizations	10	12	4

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	Total Response Group	Educator Subgroup	Non-educator Subgroup
To encourage participation by local groups, organizations, and agencies in the development of regional comprehensive plans which incorporate environmental, as well as economic and social, issues	11	17	8
To assist individuals, organizations, and agencies in the interpretation of environmental legislation	12	14	13
To encourage an interdisciplinary approach to environmental education programs in schools	13	9	16
To encourage the growth of educational programs at existing nature and science centers	14	10	14
To encourage local groups, organizations and agencies to make use of available environmental studies, maps and information	15	18	12
To encourage governmental agencies, educational institutions, businesses and industries to develop and disseminate information on the environment	16	[illegible]	15
To encourage individuals to participate in the development of regional, comprehensive plans which incorporate environmental, as well as economic and social, issues	17	13	17
To encourage schools to develop informal environmental education activities	18	16	19
To encourage local groups, organizations and agencies to develop techniques for determining their goals and priorities	19	19	18
To promote employment opportunities in environmental fields for paraprofessionals	20	20	20
To have governmental agencies, educational institutions, businesses and industries encourage students to develop and collect technical data and environmental information	21	21	21
To encourage use of private lands for environmental education	22	22	22

APPENDIX F

Rank Order of Implementation Strategies From Most Important to Least Important Based on Average SHOULD BE Ratings of:

	Total Response Group	Educator Subgroup	Non-educator Subgroup
To develop an environmental awareness in the total population	1	1	1
To provide teachers and school administrators with environmental information and classroom techniques in environmental education	2	2	4
To make use of all media for the dissemination of environmental information	3	4	3
To involve youth in the implementation of action programs to improve the environment	4	3	8
To compile and disseminate information about local, regional and statewide organizations, agencies, institutions and businesses which will provide speakers, literature, resource people, information or financial assistance to support local environmental activities	5	5	9
To provide assistance in the development of environmental legislation	6	10	2
To develop a comprehensive State environmental education plan	7	6	7
To provide technical assistance to local groups, organizations and agencies in the development and implementation of their goals and priorities	8	12	5
To provide for communication and the exchange of environmental information between conservation agencies, organizations and the public	9	11	6
To aid in the coordination of all New Hampshire environmental education programs	10	9	10

	Total Response Group	Educator Subgroup	Non-educator Subgroup
To develop curriculum materials and audiovisual aids for environmental education	11	7	12
To train adult leaders of youth organizations to work with youth in the implementation of environmental action programs	12	14	11
To develop local outdoor classrooms for use by all age levels	13	8	18
To develop occupational information on career opportunities in environmental fields for all educational levels	14	13	14
To make environmental studies an integral part of college curricula	15	18	13
To provide on-the-job training for professionals and para-professionals employed in environmental fields	16	15	17
To assist local groups in planning and conducting environmental hearings and meetings	17	17	15
To provide pre-service training for professional and para-professional careers in environmental fields	18	16	20
To develop techniques for finding, orienting, and keeping volunteers	19	22	16
To provide problem-centered environmental studies courses for adults	20	19	19
To develop re-training programs for career opportunities in environmental fields	21	20	21
To develop regional environmental studies centers	22	21	22